

Coin Husker

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
Nebraska Numismatic Association



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COIN HUSKER

Nebraska Numismatic Association

January 2003

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COIN HUSKER is the publication of the Nebraska Numismatic Association. Articles are solely the views of the authors. Your questions, suggestions, articles, or advertising are avidly solicited. N.N.A., P.O. Box 82, Omaha, NE 68101-0082.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"The income tax is too difficult for a mathematician to do.
It takes a philosopher." – Albert Einstein*

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

MY DEAR COINHUSKERS,

Perhaps with the way things are going on the gridiron we should change the name of this publication. Just kidding, as I am still an ardent fan of football and coin collecting.

Things are well underway in planning for the state show. It is to be held MARCH 29 and 30 in OMAHA. Steve Drake is already taking orders for the bourse. We hope to have 35-40 dealers to show their merchandise. Tom Hammand – last years chairman – has suggested that dealers with a storefront location make an effort to promote the YN auction. If you are a dealer and wish to participate, contact Steve Drake at the address found in this publication.

I have been attending several shows and I find that the true collector is back. I am being asked for high grade type coins as well as better date Lincoln cents, Buffalo nickels, and Walking Liberty halves. With this kind of action, prices will only go higher. If you have a hole or two in a specific set, now may be the best time to consider finishing it.

The first show of the New Year is at GRAND ISLAND ON THE 18TH AND 19TH OF JANUARY. As I close let me wish the good LORD will shower his blessing on each of you in the New Year – just as he did for me in the past year.

See you down the road at some future show. Please stop and say HELLO!

Sincerely,
Jim Crosby

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CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Article V, Section 1, of the constitution states the President shall call for nominations of officers to appear in the January issue of the club's publication. This year the offices of President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer must be filled. Please send nominations to the Nebraska Numismatic Association, P. O. Box 82, Omaha, NE 68101-0082. Nominations must be received by February 7, 2003.

Young Numismatist Auction

The N.N.A. is going to have a Young Numismatist auction at the convention. The auction will be held on Saturday March 29th at 2:30 PM. If you wish to donate items for the auction, please send them to: N.N.A., P.O. Box 82, Omaha, NE 68101-0082.

Fremont Coin Club – has issued two wooden nickels to help commemorate the club's 44th annual coin show scheduled for April 27, 2003. The wooden nickels are available by mail at 25¢ each plus a self-address-stamped-envelope. Send payment to: Fremont Coin Club, c/o William H. Passiack, 1253 E 19th St., Fremont, NE 68025. Also, the club had encased cents made to commemorate the club's 500th meeting held on Dec. 21st. A two coin set of a 2002 & 1959 dated pennies are \$5.00 plus a self-address-stamped-envelope. Send payment to: Fremont Coin Club, c/o Eli Harrah Jr., 1622 W. 10th St., Fremont, NE 68025.

York Lions Club – The York Lions Club is planning on hosting a (?) show January 25 & 26, 2003. The question mark (?) indicates trains, planes, coins, and hobbies in general (firearms excluded) as well as items found in flea markets. For more information, contact Dennis Eddy, 1313 Meadow Lane, York, NE 68467, phone: (402) 362-1188.

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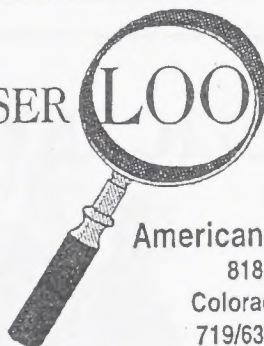
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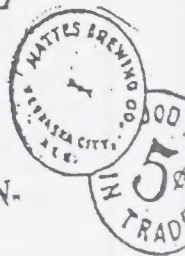
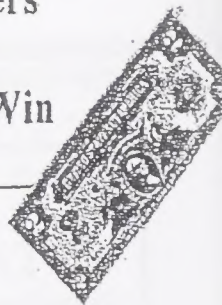
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CALENDAR

- Jan. 18-19 Grand Island Coin Club, 44th Annual Coin Show, Riverside Inn, 3333 Ramada Road, Grand Island
- Feb. 9 Nebraska City Coin Club, 39th Annual Coin Show, Memorial Building, 810 1st Corso, Nebraska City
- MAR 29-30 NEBRASKA NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION, 48TH ANNUAL CONVENTION, hosted by the Omaha Coin Club, Holiday Inn's Ford Hall, I-80 & 72nd St., Omaha**
- Apr. 13 Lincoln Coin Club, Annual Show, Airport Ramada Inn, Airport exit on I-80, Lincoln
- Apr. 26-27 South Dakota Coin & Stamp Association, 52nd Annual Show, Ramkota Inn 1901 9th Ave. SW, Watertown, SD
- Apr. 27 Fremont Coin Club, 44th Annual Coin Show, Fremont City Auditorium 9th & Hwy. 77, Fremont
- Aug. 30-31 NTCA National Token and Medal Show, hosted by the Omaha Coin Club, Holiday Inn's Ford Hall, I-80 & 72nd St., Omaha

FUTURE N.N.A. CONVENTIONS

- 2004 49th Annual Convention, hosted by the Fremont Coin Club, Fremont
- 2005 50th Annual Convention, hosted by the Omaha Coin Club, Omaha

If your club would like to host a future Nebraska Numismatic Association Convention, Please send your bid to the NNA.

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History and Info on 'Coining'



There are many different stories as to how the Military/Challenge Coin came to be. Depending on whom you talk to or where you get your information from the stories range from World War I to Vietnam. The oldest coin we have actually seen came from the Korean War. Here are a few stories as well as an actual organizational regulation on "Coin Checks".

This is the oldest coin we have actually seen. We are told that COL "Buffalo Bill" Quin, 17th Infantry, had them made during the Korean War 1950-1952. If anyone has an older coin please let us know and we will post it on the site.



Coining a Tradition

Taken from Soldiers Magazine

Aug 94 Vol 49, No 8

Story by Maj. Jeanne Fraser Brooks

Coins are as diverse as the units that present them.

WITHIN days of his liberation from a prisoner of war camp, Sgt. Troy Dunlap received two Iraqi coins from an employee of the hotel where he and the other U.S. POWs were being housed by the Red Cross following their release. "One for you and one for me," he told Maj. Rhonda Cornum who also had been taken prisoner when their UH-60 helicopter was shot down by members of Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard during Operation Desert Storm. "We joked that we could use them like military coins. ... We planned how we would use the Iraqi money to 'coin' our friends when we got back to Fort Rucker," Cornum wrote in her book, "She Went to War." "Coining" is a relatively new U.S. military tradition, but has roots in the Roman Empire, where coins were presented to reward achievements. In the U.S. military, the tradition goes back to the early 1960s. A member of the 11th Special Forces Group took old coins, had them over stamped with a different emblem, then presented them to unit members, according to Roxanne Merritt, curator of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum at Fort Bragg, N.C. A former commander of the 10th SFG picked up on the

idea, becoming the first to mint a unit coin for a U.S. military unit. The 10th Group remained the only Army unit with its own coin until the mid-1980s, Merritt said, when "an explosion took place and everybody started minting coins." Originally, the coins, which bear the unit crest on the front and whatever design the unit wants on the back, were given out by commanders and sergeants major to recognize outstanding acts performed by soldiers in the course of duty. "They're a real morale booster," said Duvall, "and tell the soldier, 'you're a member of our unit' which builds unit cohesion. The soldiers carry their credit card, driver's license and unit coin - their wallets are permanently deformed." Don Phillips, a former commander of the 20th SFG, designed a coin for his unit and presented it to his soldiers when he retired. "Another unit asked me to make a coin for them, and then another, so I went into business making them," said Phillips. To date, Phillips has made coins for "between 600 and 700 units." The tradition has spread to the other services and is even being adopted by paramilitary units like the U.S. Marshall's SWAT team, according to Phillips. The proliferation of coins and their availability to the general public in post gift shops has caused Dr. Joseph Fisher, Special Operations Command historian, to view them as "not as special as they used to be; there are so many of them out there now." But that doesn't stop Fisher from carrying his with him at all times. Making the coins available for purchase has added yet another dimension to the tradition - collecting. SMA Richard A. Kidd has approximately 300 of the coins on display in his office "museum." He has even issued an open invitation to soldiers visiting the Washington, D.C., area to stop by his office "even when I'm not here" to see his collection of unit memorabilia. According to Phillips, World War II soldiers were given a coin when they mustered out of the service. But it wasn't until the Vietnam era that a "challenge-response" was added to the tradition of giving unit members a coin. The initial challenge was to prove membership in a particular unit by producing the unit coin. That was followed by the addition of the requirement to "buy a round" if a soldier didn't have the coin. "Buying a round isn't the only challenge these days," said Phillips. "Drinking is frowned on, so the challenge can be anything. If you don't have your coin, you get the detail." Kidd still uses the original premise in distributing coins and carries some with him whenever he travels. "It's a way to immediately recognize above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty actions on the part of a soldier when you're in the field," said Kidd.

History of the Challenge Coin

During World War I, American volunteers from all parts of the country filled the newly formed flying squadrons. Some were wealthy scions attending colleges such as Yale and Harvard who quit in mid-term to join the war. In one squadron a wealthy lieutenant ordered medallions struck in solid bronze carrying the squadron emblem for every member of his squadron. He himself carried his medallion in small leather pouch around his neck.

Shortly after acquiring the medallions, the pilot's aircraft was severely damaged by ground fire. He was forced to land behind enemy lines and was immediately captured by a German patrol. In order to discourage his escape, the Germans took all of his personal identification except for the small leather pouch around his neck. In the meantime, he was taken to a small French town near the front. Taking advantage of a bombardment that night, he escaped. However, he was without personal identification.

He succeeded in avoiding German patrols and reached the front lines. With great difficulty, he crossed no-man's land. Eventually, he stumbled onto a French outpost. Unfortunately, the French in this sector had been plagued by saboteurs. They sometimes masqueraded as civilians and wore civilian clothes. Not recognizing the young pilot's American accent, the

French thought him a saboteur and made ready to execute him. Just in time, he remembered his leather pouch containing the medallion. He showed the medallion to his would-be executioners. His French captors recognized the squadron insignia on the medallion and delayed long enough for him to confirm his identity. Instead of shooting him, they gave him a bottle of wine.

Back at his squadron, it became a tradition to ensure that all members carried their medallion or coin at all times. This was accomplished through a challenge in the following manner: a challenger would ask to see the coin. If the challenged could not produce his coin, he was required to buy a drink of choice for the member who challenged him. If the challenged member produced his coin, the challenging member was required to pay for the drink. This tradition continued throughout the war and for many years after while surviving members of the squadron were still alive.

The fighting men and women of the 48th Intelligence Squadron proudly continue this tradition.

Some Organizations even have regulations regarding Military Coins. Here is an example.

A 'Coin Check' consists of a challenge and a response.

1. RULES:

- a. The challenge is initiated by drawing your coin, holding it in the air by whatever means possible and state, scream, shout or otherwise verbally acknowledge that you are initiating a coin check. Another, but less vocal method is to firmly place it on the bar, table, Or floor (this should produce an audible noise which can be easily heard by those being challenged, but try not to leave a permanent imprint). If you accidentally drop your coin and it makes an audible sound upon impact, then you have just "accidentally" initiated a coin check. (This is called paying the price for improper care of your coin."
- b. The response consists of all those persons being challenged drawing their coin in a like manner (other organizational coins are invalid). You must produce a coin with YOUR UNIT'S LOGO on it.
- c. If you are challenged and are unable to properly respond, you must buy a round of drinks for the challenger and the group being challenged.
- d. If everyone being challenged responds in the correct manner, the challenger must buy a round of drinks for all those people he challenged.
- e. Failure to buy a round is a despicable crime and will require that you turn-in your Coin to the issuing agency.

2. Coin checks are permitted, ANY TIME, ANY PLACE'. (Keep OPSEC in mind, be smart!)

3. There are no exceptions to the rules. They apply to those clothed or unclothed. At the time of the challenge you are permitted one step and an arms reach to locate your coin. If you still cannot reach it -- SORRY ABOUT THAT!

4. A Coin is a coin. Coins attached on belt buckles are considered "belt buckles." Coins on key chains are considered "key chains." Coins placed in a "holder/clasp" and worn around the neck like a necklace are valid and are considered a coin.

(IN THE MEAN TIME, BUY A ROUND, YOU CHEAP SKATE).

FULL HORN BUFFALO NICKEL CLUB

The Buffalo Nickel: America's Handsomest Coin

(C) 1997, 1998 by Michael E. Marotta, ANA R-162953

This article first appeared in the May 1997 issue of *The Numismatist*. The version here is slightly different and is unique to *The Full Horn* page.]

The Buffalo Nickel may be America's best-designed coin. It certainly wears well. James Fraser's design and the tough copper-nickel alloy combined to produce a stunning and yet practical medium of commerce.

America's coinage had changed. For over 100 years, our Liberty was always a woman. There was no doubt about it. Look at a Bust Half or a Seated Liberty Quarter and you know you are looking at a female. Longacre's Indianhead Cent has a strong face, but is still of a woman, some would say a girl. However, the Barber Liberty is androgynous; it seems to be of a male, yet the lines and planes create an ambiguous image. Not so the work of Fraser. Like the Half Eagle and Quarter Eagle gold pieces of Bela Lyon Pratt, the Buffalo Nickel clearly presents Liberty as a native American man.

Other Liberties, such as the Morgan Dollar or Mercury Dime, have masses of complex curls and swirls. Miss Liberty on the previous five cent nickel (1883 - 1912) had the complicated textures of the silver dollar. At the other extreme, however, Barber's Liberty for the fractional silver coins had very few details. But silver and nickel are different metals. Unlike silver, nickel is hard. (Chemists even use the word "tenacious" to describe nickel.) It wears extremely well. Barber's five cent piece did not take good advantage of the alloy.

By contrast, Fraser's artistic effort has a fundamental vocabulary of detail that cannot easily be worn away. This coin is rugged. The details are broadly and deeply cut. Even in grades below fine, both the native Liberty and the buffalo remain expressive and alive.

The obverse has three planes. The lowest plane contains the small areas of background to the immediate right of the face and below the chin, between the feathers and the neck, and above the top of the head. The front of the face, the nose, eyes, mouth and chin are in the next lowest plane. Above this is the middle and back of the head.

The heavy metal of the hair protects the image of the front of the face. Therefore, no matter how worn a Buffalo Nickel is, the native always has some expression. You can see his eyes and mouth and these are the strongest communicators on the human face.

Look at a "Buffnick" in About Good grade. The rim is worn flat. The legend Liberty is gone. The date has been erased. Even so, the front of this Liberty's face is unmistakable. You can see the feathers and the braid.

The reverse has perhaps six distinct planes. The animal's mouth is on the second plane from the lowest. The eye is on the fourth and is protected well by the surrounding metal. The shoulder of the bison and the rim of the coin protect the deeper levels.

In lower grades, on the reverse, the bison has no horn and no tail. And yet, the animal's powerful shoulders and shaggy head dominate the design. He is still a bull.

Fraser must have known that nickel alloy would stand up to commercial circulation. On the other hand, apparent fear that, like the first Liberty five cent pieces of 1883, the Buffalo might become a "racketeer nickel" motivated a change in the design. The Type I coin has the bison standing on a mound. This is not a flat, two-dimensional effect, but a realistic mound that juts off the surface.

The words "Five Cents" are on the exposed exterior of this butte. Nonetheless the Type II came out in the first year of issue. The revised design cut the mark of value into the depth of the coin, protected within an exergue. Time and experience indicate that this may not have been necessary. Even a coin graded Good still displays much of the legend, FIVE CENTS.

Grousing about new coins is an unwritten right of all collectors. So it is no surprise that the new five cent piece was the subject of criticism. Writing in *The Numismatist* for May, 1913, W. H. De Schon, claimed that the legend "E Pluribus Unum" was crowded. "This fault, together with the fact that the letters are very small, will soon reduce the words through wear to mere ridges on the surface." In fact, this is not what happened to coins in circulation. The legend E PLURIBUS UNUM is protected by the rim and by the shoulder of the buffalo.

Interestingly, we grade the coin on two details, both found on the reverse: the horn and the tail of the bison. This fully supports the obvious fact that the coin wears well. The bison's shoulder is the highest surface, the one that wears first. Yet, we do not estimate the amount of wear remaining to judge how circulated the coin is. As a result, coins that are technically in middle to low grades are still visually powerful and compelling.

This is important to the collector because the branch mints in Denver and San Francisco struck only a fraction of the population for most years. Until America edged out the Great Depression, D and S mintmarks appeared on only about 5% to 20% of the five cent coins. As a result, mint state examples from these outlets remain pricy. Assembling a date and mint set in the middle ranges ("collector grade") of Fine to Extremely Fine is much more affordable. Fortunately, a little patience yields a stunning array of obverses and reverses.

As it was passed from hand to hand in circulation, the surface quickly descended into a narrow range of uniform grays. However, the deep cuts in the details trap and hold contaminants. So, over time, as the grade deteriorated in circulation, the depths of the coin, both obverse and reverse, acquired a hard blackness. This offsets the otherwise uniform coloration of the uppermost surfaces.

Over time, an undisturbed coin will tone. However, the copper-nickel alloy is not nearly as reactive as silver or bronze. In this series, toning is most often subtle and also found most often on higher grade coins.

Collectors chasing higher grade examples have a different challenge. For many issues from the branch mints are weakly or unevenly struck. Nickel is hard. We can criticize the efforts of Fraser and the Mint today, only because we examine them under high-powered lenses.

How much of this was in Fraser's plan and how much was luck, we may never know. It is important, however, not to underestimate the artist's insight. Consider Fraser's other famous work, "The End of the Trail." It is so compelling that it is almost over-done. Yet, like the Parthenon, 2500 years of weathering would never wear away the essential geometry of the work.

When the Republic of Ireland was born, the poet William Butler Yeats headed the committee for selecting the new country's coinage. Among his first choices for a designer was James Fraser. Fraser turned down the assignment, pleading other commitments. We know those commitments today as the Oregon Trail Memorial Half Dollar, which he created in collaboration with his wife, Laura Gardin. That coin has the same stark line work, though it is a very different design.

The Jefferson commemorative five cent piece replaced the Buffalo Nickel in 1938. Yet, after sixty years, the older coin is still the object of great attention from new collectors. We repeat that the animal is not really a "buffalo" but "an American bison" and we tell of Black Diamond. We point out that the "chief" on the obverse is not a chief and is, in fact, a composite of three faces.

The obverse and reverse are really the same as they always were in the early days of the Republic. The obverse portrayed Liberty. The reverse often included natural, living elements of the continent, mostly the eagle, but also corn, cotton, and tobacco, and, on this one coin, the American bison.

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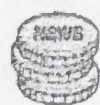
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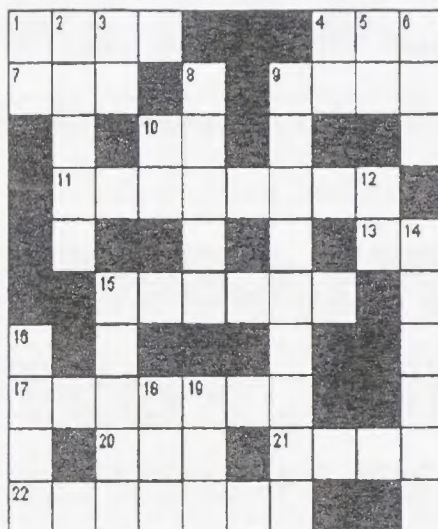


Making Cents



Euro Crossword Puzzle

Check your answers with the Answer Key

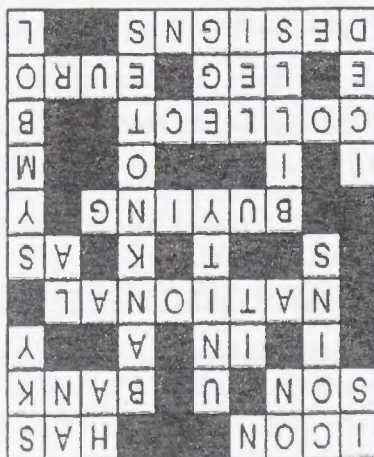


Across

1. A picture link on a computer
4. Owns
7. Mom and Dad's boy (rhymes with "fun")
9. A place where money is kept
10. Opposite of "out"
11. A country's _____ anthem
13. Last two letters of 4 across
15. Opposite of selling
17. What numismatists do with coins
20. What your ankle connects your foot to
21. Europe's new currency
22. The marks on money

Down

1. Exists (rhymes with "fizz")
2. Metal currency
3. Opposite of "off"
4. Sound of laughter
5. Indefinite article (rhymes with "man")
6. Where stars and clouds are found
8. Togetherness; agreement
9. Paper currency (see 15 down)
10. Tag! You're _____!
12. Louisiana (abbreviation)
14. One thing that stands for another
15. Another word for banknotes
16. Frozen or frosted
18. Hawaiian flower necklace
19. What Peter hatched from



Statewide Meeting Nights

Fremont – Fremont Coin Club, 3rd Saturday, The Evangelical Free Church Social Hall,
20th & Lincoln Streets, 7:30 PM

Grand Island – Grand Island Coin Club, 1st Monday, Blue Flame Room, Gas Company

Lincoln – Lincoln Coin Club, 2nd Thursday, Hampton Inn, Old Cheney Rd. & Hwy 2,
7:00 PM

Nebraska City – Nebraska City Coin Club, 3rd Tuesday in Jan, Feb, May, Sept, Nov,
Nebraska City Fire Department downtown, 7:00 PM

North Platte – Platte Valley Coin Club, 3rd Tuesday, Northwestern Public Service
Co. "Blue Flame Room" 215 E. 5th St., 7:30 PM

Omaha – Omaha Coin Club, 3rd Friday, New Cassel Retire Center's Auditorium,
900 No. 90th St., 7:30 PM

Omaha – SAC/Midwest Coin Club Coin Club, 1st Tuesday, Denny's Restaurant, 84th &
I-80, 7:00 PM

Scottsbluff – Oregon Trail Coin Club, 2nd Wednesday, McDonald's Office,
511 West 27th, 7:30 PM

South Sioux City – Siouxland coin Club, write for information; 901 S. Cecelia,
Sioux City, Iowa 51106

Seward – Nebraska Token Collectors Club, 2nd Sunday, Cattle National Bank 2:00 PM

Wahoo – Wahoo Coin Club, 1st Saturday, Saunders County Historical Museum,
240 N. Walnut, 8:00 PM

NEBRASKA NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

Officers & Executive Board

PRESIDENT:

Jim Crosby
720 W. Columbia
Albion, NE 68620

2ND VICE-PRESIDENT:

Francis McGovern
6211 Surrey Hills Dr.
Omaha, NE 68122

1ST VICE-PRESIDENT

M. F. Rumbaugh
2316 W. Oklahoma
Grand Island, NE

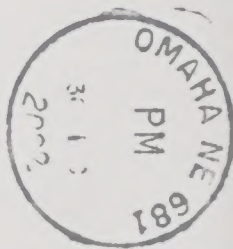
SECRETARY/TREASURER

Steven C. Drake
P.O. Box 82
Omaha, NE 68101-0082

OTHER MEMBERS: Cathy Taysen, Omaha; Don Hespe, Leigh; Tom Hammond,
North Platte



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OMAHA, NE 68101-0082



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